

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

MILLENNIAL STAR.

"Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the Lord our God."—JEREMIAH.

No. 12. Vol. XXIX.

Saturday, March 23, 1867.

Price One Penny.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD.

BY ELDER C. W. PENROSE.

No person has any right to administer in the name of God, unless he holds the Priesthood of God. The term Priesthood conveys the idea both of power and authority. Authority conferred by God upon man to act in his name, power to exercise that authority effectually.

Without revelation and inspiration there can be no true Priesthood. Revelation is necessary for the calling of proper persons to hold divine authority, and inspiration is necessary to qualify them for the proper performance of their duties in that authority. One man cannot act legally in the name of another, except he receive from him a legal appointment; neither can any man act legally and acceptably in the name of the Lord, without authority communicated from the Lord. But without revelation there can be no communication from the Lord, and consequently no true Priesthood. In order that a man may act efficiently for, and in behalf of God, he must understand his mind and wishes, and his administrations must be accompanied with divine power, and this cannot be without he possesses the

divine spirit; therefore, there can be no true Priesthood without inspiration.

A man who holds the true Priesthood, is, as far as his calling extends, a representative of God. If he holds the fulness of the keys of that Priesthood, he is as full a representative of Deity as mortal men are able to receive; and every man that holds any portion of that Priesthood, is a representative of Deity in proportion to the keys of power and authority conferred upon him, and the faithful exercise of his priestly functions.

Mortal beings are not naturally able to endure the presence of immortal beings; hence the necessity for men to act in the place of God. When Moses went up into the mount and communed with the Lord, one brief glance at the dimmer rays of the eternal glory made his face so bright and shining, that when he came down he had to cover it with a veil, for the children of Israel could not endure to look upon him. When angels have ministered unto men, they have been compelled to veil their glory, lest mortality should be consumed before them; and even when, in vision, they

have appeared in their heavenly state, the favored mortal has fallen at their feet, as though he were dead, and had to say "there remained no strength in me." God, therefore, whenever he wished to communicate his will to mankind, called certain men to stand in his place, and to act in his stead unto their fellow mortals. Upon them he conferred what was called the holy Priesthood.

In ancient days, there were two branches, or divisions of that Priesthood: one called the Melchisedec Priesthood, after Melchisedec, king of Salem, who obtained high keys and great power therein, so that it became identified with his name; and the other called the Aaronic, or Levitical Priesthood, which, during a certain period, was confined to the lineal descendants of the family of Levi, and therefore became identified with his name, and with the name of Aaron, the firstborn sons of whose house held the highest keys in this lesser branch of the Priesthood.

The holy Priesthood was conferred upon Adam, and the leading men of what is now called the Patriarchal age; and by virtue of their calling they offered sacrifices, drew nigh unto the Lord, obtained great knowledge of him and of his works, terrestrial and celestial, became powerful preachers of righteousness, received a testimony that they were accepted of God, obtained important promises for their posterity, and prepared themselves for that higher development that awaited them, when they passed from their mortal state. They held that high Priesthood which came to be known by the name of Melchisedec, and which held the keys of communion with the Highest, and authority to administer the higher ordinances of God, and power to guide and govern mankind, and lead them to the greatest glory, even the celestial. They obtained knowledge concerning the promised Savior, and of the commandments and ordinances of eternal life, and enjoyed great and glorious blessings and manifestations from on high.

But some who held this great power and authority, corrupted themselves and departed from the Lord, and were led astray by seducing spirits into

idolatry; and thus priestcraft was established among men. Such was the order of Priesthood among the Egyptians, when God called Moses, and spake to him out of "the burning bush." He afterwards gave him the true Priesthood, by virtue of which he obtained such power over the false Priesthood of the Egyptians, approached nigh unto the Lord, and received commandments and ordinances for the house of Israel. Now, it was under the power and ordinances of this higher Priesthood, that the children of Israel were brought forth from the bondage of Egypt, "with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm," and were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," and "drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them which was Christ." And if they had hearkened unto Moses, who was the full representation of Deity unto them, they would have been brought nigh unto the Lord, and have become "a nation of kings and priests;" but, although Moses sought diligently to sanctify them before the Lord, yet, because of their want of faith, and their "hardness of heart," he was not able to accomplish what his soul desired, and what the Lord designed for them if they would have received it. Therefore, the lesser law of carnal commandments was added because of transgression, and the lesser Priesthood administered to them, and God took away Moses from their midst, and with him the fulness of the keys of the holy Melchisedec Priesthood which he held.

When Jesus came, to whom Moses and Elias administered on the mount of transfiguration, the holy Priesthood, after the order of Melchisedec, was restored. The Father calling Jesus to that holy calling, as it is written of him, "called of God a Priest after the order of Melchisedec," and he conferred it upon his Apostles, saying, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." By virtue of that Priesthood, they became the true representatives of God to man, for Jesus said to them, "Whoso receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." By that Priesthood they received the word of the Lord, and imparted it to the Church,

"for the perfecting of the Saints." By revelation they were able to call and ordain others to the same High Priesthood, to assist them in their ministrations, and some to the lesser Priesthood to administer in the lesser ordinances of the Gospel, that lesser Priesthood then being confined no longer to the members of one family, for as Paul said (Heb. vii, 12) there was a change of the Priesthood as well as a change of the law.

Now, while the holy Priesthood remained on earth, the Saints of God were guided to "the unity of the faith;" they enjoyed "the knowledge of the truth;" the power of God was manifested among them; the signs and gifts which were promised to believers were exercised, and they rejoiced in a full comprehension of things "kept hid from the wise and prudent." But when, through the wickedness of mankind, the Apostles and others who held the holy Priesthood were slain, and, as in former times, the world was left without the true Priesthood to guide and enlighten, thick clouds of spiritual darkness again gathered round, and shut out the pure rays of "the sun of righteousness," which for a season had dispersed them.

Since then, many persons have impiously stepped forth from among their fellows, and have arrogated to themselves the right to administer in the name of the Lord. They have placed human calling and ordination in the place of divine revelation, and human learning in the place of inspiration; therefore, there is no knowledge of divine things among the people. Their ordinances are mere "forms of godliness without the power thereof;" their teachings are only private interpretations of uninspired translations of the writings of dead Prophets, and are almost as various as they are numerous; and the societies which have sprung into being from the spirit of such leaders, are, what might be expected from such a source, without union of sentiment, principle, or government,—an incongruous heap of discordant elements.

Some of the teachers of modern times have seen that there is no real Priesthood on the earth, and, feeling desirous of benefiting mankind by

offering to them their views upon religious matters, have considered they had as good a right as anybody else to act in the position of Gospel ministers, and through their eloquence and earnestness, have made themselves a name among men. If they had confined themselves to ventilating their opinions, as such, with the desire for the enlightenment and progress of the masses, they would not have been under condemnation, but they also have dared to usurp the functions of the Priesthood, and to administer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, thus taking "the name of the Lord in vain." For such acts they will have to answer in the great day of accounts.

For many hundred years the true Priesthood has not been upon the earth. By the admissions of modern teachers themselves, the two essentials for the existence of the true Priesthood, viz., revelation and inspiration, have ceased to be among men, therefore, all who act in the priestly office, are acting without right, and their administrations are entirely useless, and have no force of any kind in them except to lead the people from the way of truth.

But, it may be asked, "is it not right for good and sincere men, who have devoted their lives and talents to the cause of religion, and who feel in their hearts a vocation for the ministry, to administer in the name of the Lord?" Let the oft-quoted words of Paul in Heb. v, 4, be the answer, "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." Look at Paul's own case. He had become converted; he had seen Jesus, and had "heard the voice of his mouth," had been healed of his blindness by a special manifestation of the power of God, had been baptized and "washed away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord," yet he had no right to administer a single ordinance in the name of the Lord, until called by the Holy Ghost, and ordained by competent authority. And he went forth in that Priesthood and preached, "not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration and power of the Spirit." He was called by revelation,

and qualified by inspiration, without which there is no true Priesthood, and consequently no administration which God will acknowledge.

Oh in what a benighted condition the children of men have been for many centuries! And even now, while they are boasting of their superior light and great wisdom, they are lost in the fog of their own folly, guessing, hoping, feeling their way to heaven, quarrelling over vestments, candles, flowers, and smoke, disputing upon every vital principle, without a Prophet, Apostle, or a single inspired voice to guide them, "the blind leading the blind," and all falling in the ditch together.

But thanks be unto God, a new era is opening up to this fallen world. A new dispensation, the greatest of all, has commenced, even "the dispensation of the fulness of times." The holy Priesthood is again restored, and it will never be taken from the earth again. It may be asked, "how could men be called again to administer in the Priesthood, seeing that there was not a man in the world who had the authority thereof?" Reader, let me tell you in solemnity, and with gratitude to God, that John the Baptist, who held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and by the revelation and commandment of God, ordained them to the power and authority of that Priesthood, by which, like him, they were authorized to baptize "for the remission of sins." But as he had not the power to lay on hands for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, he could not confer upon them that power. Therefore Peter, James and John, who, as before shown, held the holy Melchisedec Priesthood, afterwards came and ordained Joseph Smith to the Apostleship which they held, and conferred upon him the keys of this great latter-day dispensation. God inspired him with the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, so being called by

revelation, and qualified by inspiration, he was able to stand as the mouth-piece and representative of God, and to administer in all the ordinances of his house. By revelation he also called others to the ministry, and the Lord inspired them for the work, so that light and power, and the knowledge of the truth, are again within the reach of all who desire them.

When Joseph Smith was martyred for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, his mantle fell upon Brigham Young, the chief of the Twelve Apostles, who now leads the Church, and is the representative of God to man by virtue of his calling in the Priesthood, and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. With him are the Apostles, High Priests, Seventies, Elders, &c., of this great and last dispensation, upon whom rests the ancient Priesthood, with the same authority, power, and spirit, as in days of old. All the ancient ordinances, keys, and gifts, are being restored, for these are "the times of restitution spoken of by all the holy Prophets since the world began."

Therefore, let all the people come unto them as unto the living oracles of God, that they may learn his ways, and walk in his paths, and prepare themselves for his presence; and let all those who have been called unto the least portion of this Priesthood, count it as a holy thing. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Strive to be truly God's representatives to man; seek constantly for inspiration from on high, and diligently prepare for higher keys, and further advancement in this holy Priesthood, that peradventure, in holy places, you may yet be prepared to become kings and priests unto God, and advancing step by step, may ultimately receive the fulness of the keys thereof, enter the sacred presence of the Highest, and be clothed with the power of endless lives.

A world without a living, divinely inspired Priesthood, is like a ship which has lost both compass and rudder, befogged in an unknown ocean, driven about with fierce winds in the midst of breakers, and rocks, and unknown perils, subject to be dashed in pieces, and engulfed in the unknown depths below.

PROPHECY FULFILLED.

(From the Deseret News, Feb. 6th, 1867.)

Over thirty-three years ago the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints received a commandment from the Lord to seek redress at the hands of the legally constituted authorities, for the wrongs which they had suffered. They were then few in number, compared with the present time. But the same spirit of persecution which afterwards drove them mercilessly from the eastern States to this wild region of country, had even then made them suffer bitterly by mob violence. To recount the persecutions which they endured, would be to relate the most barbarous and unprecedented acts ever perpetrated in any country claiming to be civilized.

Statements of their sufferings and the outrages committed upon them, were submitted to the constituted authorities, sustained by the strongest and most unimpeachable testimony; but their petitions were treated with neglect, and contemptuously cast aside. In accordance with the commandment which they had received, judges, governors, State legislatures, the Congress of the nation, and the President, were severally appealed to, as redress failed to be obtained from each; while the persecutions increased in virulence in proportion with the increasing numbers of those who composed the Church.

Judges disgraced their judicial position, refused to the injured Saints even the shadow of justice, leagued themselves with the mobocrats and ruffians to destroy the "Mormons," and harassed them and their leaders with the most unjust accusations and vexatious lawsuits, denying them the privilege of calling witnesses by trumping up charges against those whom they thus called and having them arrested, while men were suborned to swear anything and everything which might secure a conviction; yet in that they were foiled through the providences of the Almighty. Governors, instead of hearkening to their importunities, winked at their enemies, to whom no crime was sufficiently

enormous to prevent its perpetration; and one of those governors issued an order to have the "Mormons" exterminated, or driven from the State. A State legislature, where noted mobocrats sat as representative of the people, threw out the petition of the Saints, and would not permit a committee to investigate their case, as the evidence would have revealed their own turpitude. Congress referred back the memorial forwarded to them to the same legislature; and the then President of the nation, after treating the deputation which waited on him almost with contempt, said, "Gentlemen, *your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you;*" and, "If I take up for you I shall lose the vote of Missouri!"

The Lord, in the revelation referred to, declared what would be the result if these repeated appeals were unheeded, and if the importunings of his persecuted Saints did not obtain redress for them:—"And if the President heed them not, then will the Lord arise and come forth out of his hiding place, and in his fury vex the nation, and in his hot displeasure, and in his fierce anger, in his time, will cut off those wicked, unfaithful and unjust stewards, and appoint them their portion among hypocrites and unbelievers." (Doc. & Cov., page 283, 3rd European edition.) From the time when the commandment was given, until the first appeal was made to the President by the Prophet Joseph Smith in person, something like six years had elapsed, during which petition after petition, and memorial after memorial, had been presented to various authorities, and supported by immense numbers of affidavits from the outraged and oppressed, and from friends of law and order who were not members of the Church. But redress was not obtained, and the appeal was carried to the Lord of Hosts, whose commandment had been thus strictly obeyed. Have the words of the Lord been thus far fulfilled, when he declared the consequences of refusing

redress to his people? Has not the nation been vexed with a sore vexation? Have those wicked, unfaithful and unjust stewards been removed from their places? Let facts bear witness.

One great reason why the cry of disloyalty has been raised against us, as a people, has been because we have honestly told the nation of the troubles and distress which were coming upon it. In doing this, we but declared what the Almighty had revealed. But with all the threatened evils, there were conditions expressed, obedience to which would have warded off the day of tribulation, as Nineveh was saved through repentance on the preaching of Jonah. But it is unfashionable now to believe in God, or to admit that he has anything to do with nations, their governments, their greatness, and their downfall. Yet He lives: and men fulfil his purposes while they deny his power and sneer at his threatenings.

The dark and bloody wave which so lately rolled over the nation, was not only a consequence of the rejection of the revelations of the Almighty to its inhabitants, but was a natural and inevitable result of the manner in which the Saints were treated, in being cruelly wronged, and redress refused when importuned for. The government which can look calmly on while thirty thousand citizens of the nation are robbed of every right, by mob violence, and forced to seek shelter with the beasts of the wilderness, and with scarcely less savage beings in the form of men, is simply watching in quietness the growth of a monster which, when fully developed, will seize it by the throat and strangle it. If our government had been in the hands of wise and far-seeing statesmen, they would have known that when they permitted the Constitution to be trampled on in the case of the "Mormons," the evil would grow until it became powerful enough to require the nation's might to grapple with it. Then was the time to have crushed the evil,

in its infancy, which a few years after shook the nation with its accumulated and baleful power.

But where are those unjust stewards—they who refused redress and closed their ears against the wail of the orphan, the cry of the widow, and the importunity of outraged, robbed, and plundered citizens, at whose sufferings they carelessly looked, and to whom they refused justice? Wiped out! to employ an expressive though not very elegant phrase. As a party, they have lost the power which they held so long. They are "cut off," and to-day they are impotent in the Councils of the nation. Can they see the fulfilment of that prophecy uttered more than thirty-three years ago, by Joseph the Prophet? They feel it, but do not even yet see it, though it has been fulfilled upon them to the very letter. We are not speaking of principles, but of acts and their results.

The party at whose hands we sought for redress so long, and that refused it to us, has already felt the chastening hand of the Lord. What is man that he should dash himself against the buckler of the Almighty! The reins of power are in other hands. Will they pursue the course of their predecessors, and refuse us our Constitutional rights? Or will they be nobler, more generous, and better friends of the nation than those whose places they occupy? Time will show.

We feel very humble in reflecting upon this matter. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He has decreed that justice, righteousness, liberty and freedom, shall have control over this favored land; and he holds those who sway the sceptre of power on it responsible for their acts; and the results of those acts he will make visible among the people. He inspired our fathers to frame the Constitution which has been our glory and pride, and the basis of our national greatness; and he requires of their children that its spirit be cherished, and its provisions honored.

The future of the American continent is very clearly portrayed in the Book of Mormon, every item of which will be literally fulfilled. Repentance and obedience to the mandates of that Book will save the nation; but impenitence and a rejection of the same, will bring desolation and an utter overthrow.

THE PROJECTED JEWISH COLONIZATION OF PALESTINE.

(From the Jewish Chronicle, March 1st, 1867.)

"As Messrs. Isidor and Cohn, even so have other pious men united with the Alliance for the colonization of Palestine. Among others, M. Blumenthal, the well known traveller in Palestine, M. Levy Bing, whose ardent zeal for our religion and people is likewise known to you, and, as a matter of course, your humble correspondent, who did not quit his honored friend, Rabbi Natonek, from the first day when he (the rabbi) surprised him (the correspondent) with his visit, until they took leave of each other at the railway station. The rabbi has returned to his home *via* Amsterdam, Cologne, Munich, and Vienna. As soon as he shall have recovered from the hardships of this his first journey, he intends to travel about in Hungary, Poland, and the Danubian Principalities, in order to preach on his colonization scheme from the pulpit, and to establish sub-committees in the name of the Alliance. He will then, if the Almighty gives him strength and health, go to Palestine himself, whither Rabbi Kalischer too is resolved to go, and whither probably some other gentlemen from France and Germany will repair with M. Albert Cohn, in order to labor on the spot with renewed vigor for the realisation of the colonization scheme. I conclude with the words of our revered chief rabbi, 'And the Lord will have mercy.'

"P.S.—As I learn, a meeting of the elders of the Cologne congregation took place on Sunday last, when it was resolved to solicit their pastor, Rabbi Schwarz, to form a sub-committee in connection with the Alliance for the colonization scheme.

"MORITZ HESS."

How attractive the idea of Jewish restoration proves to certain minds, and how busy their imagination is in magnifying and depicting in glowing colors every circumstance that can in any way promote their favorite idea, will appear from the following:—

It will be recollected that last year M. Henry Dunant, of Geneva, the philanthropic originator of the inter-

national convention in behalf of the wounded in time of war, published a programme of a scheme for the amelioration of Palestine, in which he assigned to the Jews a considerable part. This scheme for the "Organization of the International Society of the Orient," lately formed the theme of a lecture, delivered at Dublin, by the Rev. John Jones, of Kirkdala, in the course of which he remarked:—

A gentleman, writing from Basle, Switzerland, as correspondent of one of the American papers, states: "The society is being rapidly formed, with the strongest influences, financial and political, at his back. The Rothschilds, Sir Moses Montefiore, and other great capitalists among the Jews, are actively in sympathy with the undertaking. The plan has the favor of more than one crowned head in Europe, among them the Emperor Napoleon, of whose especial theories of nationalities it is a welcome development. Several noblemen of England, and the leading names of the Faubourg St. Germain, are also among its friends."

The scheme contemplates the obtaining from the Sultan of Turkey a concession of Palestine for a moneyed consideration. Such are the exigencies of the Sultan's exchequer, that money, come from where it may, is not to be refused. In this fact the society place their hopes of success, and that they will succeed is more than a mere surmise. Having obtained a concession of Palestine, the society will immediately construct a port at Jaffa, and a good road or railroad from that city to Jerusalem. At the same time, by the aid of special committees, Jews of Morocco, of Poland, of Moldavia, of Wallachia, of the East, of Africa, &c., would be forwarded to the newly conceded territory, their colonization there being facilitated by the well known religious sentiment of the Jews in reference to the Holy Land. These colonies of the Jews would then have distributions of land made to them at cost prices, while the city of Jerusalem

would be rebuilt in a style to rival the cities of the West. And while thus developing the resources of that magnificent country, and turning it into a financial success, it is intended at the same time to settle this portion of the Eastern question, and by an international act to neutralise Palestine, as has been done already in the case of the Lower Danube. Such is a brief outline of the scheme, of which more will be heard presently.

In Europe and the East it is computed that at the present time there are about 7,000,000 Jews—no insignificant number with which to recommence national life. While diplomacy is thus about to prepare the land for the Jews, the Jews are actively preparing for the land. From all quarters news is to the effect that the Jews are ready to emigrate, believing that the day of their restoration is at hand.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 1867.

CONSANGUINEOUS MARRIAGES.

CONSANGUINEOUS MARRIAGES, or marriages among blood relations, have sometimes been approbated, and at other times forbidden by the Almighty. The sons of Adam were obliged to marry their own sisters, or remain wifeless. It is true, some of his younger sons and daughters could have married neices and nephews, or the children of their older brothers and sisters. The great command to multiply and replenish the earth could not have been obeyed, if own brothers and sisters, and those of near blood, had not entered into marriage relations. If such marriages were wrong, the Lord could have easily remedied them, by creating wives and husbands for each of the children of Adam. But as divine wisdom considered it best to create only one pair, he must have considered consanguineous marriages as perfectly right and lawful, and made no provisions to the contrary.

Marriage among blood cousins was also sanctioned by the Lord in the days of Noah. The grand children of Noah, being brothers and sisters, and first cousins, were also commanded by the Lord, through Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, to multiply and replenish the earth. (Gen. 9: 1.) This they could not lawfully have done without marrying those very nearly related. Here, then, are two very conspicuous examples, where such marriages were, not only sanctioned, but absolutely commanded. Therefore, marriages between own brothers and sisters, and first cousins, and uncles and neices, could not have been wicked and evil before the Lord, nor in any manner displeasing in his sight. It cannot be argued that circumstances absolutely compelled such marriages; for God was abundantly able to have provided wives, either by

creation or otherwise, to have prevented sinful marriages ; but the very fact of his not providing any other way, and yet commanding them to multiply, proves, beyond all controversy, that marriage between blood relations was a divine institution both before and after the flood.

Under the law of Moses, however, consanguineous marriages were strictly forbidden, under heavy penalties. Indeed, this strict law, which Paul characterizes as a law of bondage, forbade the polygamist from marrying the sister of his wife, although of no blood relation. But the great Prophet and holy Patriarch Jacob married four wives, two of whom were own sisters, and God blessed him and his wives abundantly. Thus we see that what the law made sinful at one time, was counted a great blessing at another.

The law of Moses did not permit marriages with daughters-in-law, yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah, even Jesus Christ, and all the kings of Judah, descended from Pharez, the son of Judah, by his daughter-in-law Tamar.

The law of Moses prohibited marriages with daughters, yet righteous Lot, who was counted worthy to entertain angels over night, and to escape the destruction of Sodom, begat Moab and Ammon by his two daughters. To what extent Judah and Lot were condemned for their acts is not revealed ; but it is certain, that many things, interdicted by the law of Moses, were justifiable both before this law was given, and after it was fulfilled.

Sexual intercourse, without marriage, was, not only severely condemned by the law of Moses, but in every other dispensation. It was a heinous crime in the eyes of the Almighty, and generally subjected the guilty parties to death.

Polygamy, or the marriage of plural wives, was commanded under the law of Moses, and rules given to regulate the same : this institution was also approved and greatly blessed many centuries before the Mosaic law was given. It was likewise greatly blessed in the days of the Prophets and judges of Israel, and during the reign of their kings, and was in full force among Israel at the advent of the Messiah, and during his ministry, and in no part of the New Testament was this divine domestic relation abrogated. It seems to have been a standing, permanent institution, sanctioned in all dispensations. And yet, under certain circumstances, it was not wisdom to be practiced. In the early days of Adam, and for a few generations after the flood, the people were few ; the number of males and females was about equal ; hence the practice of polygamy, at that time, would have deprived some of the male members of their small communities of having any wife : this would have been wrong—an act of injustice towards neighboring individuals. Such were also the circumstances among the early families of the children of Lehi who colonized, in ancient times, South America : they were but few in number—their males and females about equal ; hence, the males were expressly limited, for the time being, by the direct command of God, to one wife each : this was right, and gave them all an equal privilege, until in future generations they should grow into a nation, and by wars and other casualties, be reduced to inequalities in sexual numbers, and a preponderance of females be found in the land. Then, under a new set of circumstances, plurality by divine command would be justifiable, indeed, absolutely necessary, as an act of justice to the surplus female population, that all might become honored wives and mothers. It was for this reason, that the law given to the small colony of Nephites, limiting them to one

wife, contained provisions for polygamy. "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things." (Book of Mormon, p. 118.) This proves that the monogamic law, given to that small colony, could not be changed only by a new command; and until such command should be given, they were required to limit themselves to the one wife system.

The Latter-day Saints, from the rise of the Church in 1830, till the year 1843, had no authority to marry more than one wife each. Any person, during that time, violating the law of monogamy, would have been dealt with, and expelled from the Church, as having committed sin; but when the commandment came, in 1843, it entirely changed the responsibilities of the people. The Church were laid under a command and law of heaven, to adopt this ancient Bible institution, and could no more reject it, and be justified, than they could reject baptism or any other Bible ordinance. Many institutions, ordinances, commands, and laws which were lawful and right in one age, under one set of circumstances, are unlawful and wrong in another, when under entirely new circumstances. Each dispensation, as well as each age in the same dispensation, has its peculiarities, as prescribed by the divine law, through successive Prophets and inspired men, sent forth to inform the people. The divine commands, being adapted to the condition and wants of the people, are varied according to the will of God. The command to build the ark, was not intended or any other age than the one in which it was given. The command to offer up Isaac was not binding upon future generations. The command to the Apostles to preach and baptize, was incumbent on no other individuals. The command to Lehi, limiting the small colony of American Israelites to one wife, was not binding upon another people and another age, unless the command was renewed to the latter.

The law of Moses, including consanguineous marriages, was undoubtedly of no particular force after Christ. And since the Apostles' days, the world have been without divine law upon the subject of marriages, and likewise without divine authority to administer in marriage ceremonies. Without new revelation, and a new commission, and new laws, no people can know the mind of God in regard to intermarriages among blood relations. In the absence of divine law upon this subject, there is a wide range left open, and people may differ widely in their opinions. But in a free government, like the American republic, all people should be left perfectly free and untrammelled in choosing those of near kin or otherwise, as their own consciences may dictate. No law-making department should assume the right of forcing the consciences of men to any particular standard upon a subject, which cannot, in this day, be proved to be criminal. To marry, within certain degrees of consanguinity, must certainly be distasteful, if it is not in violation of any divine law; and but few can be found who would have any desire to form such relationships: but these few ought not to be restricted by human law, but enjoy perfect freedom of conscience, until the great Jehovah shall speak, and give a new code of laws upon the subject: then the Saints can conform to the same.

It is to be hoped that the Legislature of Utah will continue, as they have done, to leave this an open question, that all religious denominations in that Territory may be free to choose their own way of thinking, in regard to the particular degrees of kindred, entitled to be connected in the holy bonds of

matrimony. Human laws upon so sacred a subject, are unjust. With equal justice, man might undertake to bind the conscience of his fellow, in regard to the particular mode of baptism which he should adopt, and restrain him with heavy penalties from every other mode; or to legislate for him a creed, and compel him to adopt that or none. Although free by the laws of the Territory, yet, up to the present time, we know of no instances of marriage between own brothers and sisters. But if such had been the case, where is the divine law, now in force, which would condemn them? And shall poor weak man dare presume to condemn a practice which the divine law does not condemn? Wisdom would say, judge not thy brother by human judgment, but by the law of God; and if there is no law of God in force, and it is uncertain how we should proceed, leave every one free to act in these religious and domestic matters, according to the dictates of conscience: anything short of this is unworthy of the spirit and freedom of the age, and especially unworthy of the free institutions of the great American Republic.

O. P.

MINUTES OF A DISTRICT CONFERENCE

HELD IN THE ODD-FELLOWS' HALL, BIRMINGHAM, ON SUNDAY, FEB. 24, 1867.

(Reported by Elder Joseph Grainger.)

There were present on the Stand—Of the Twelve Apostles, Orson Pratt, and Franklin D. Richards. Presidents of Districts, Abram Hatch, Birmingham; James McGaw, Norwich; Archibald N. Hill, Southampton; William Gibson, Nottingham; William S. Warren, Sheffield. Presidents of Conferences, Francis Platt, Birmingham; Moses Thatcher, Cheltenham; George Hunter, Warwickshire; Anson V. Call, Sheffield; Richard Benson, Bedfordshire; Samuel Southwick, Staffordshire; R. N. Russell, Liverpool; E. Frost, Herefordshire. Travelling Elders, E. Taylor, I. Aldredge, and J. Stewart.

10½ a.m.

Singing by an excellent choir.
Prayer by Elder Nicholas Groesbeck.

Elder A. Hatch, in a few introductory remarks, congratulated the Saints on the great blessings enjoyed in meeting in Conference with so many of the Elders from Zion, surrounded as they were with circumstances of so favorable a nature.

Elder Francis Platt said it was a source of pleasure to him, to be surrounded by God's ambassadors, engaged as they are in sowing the seeds

of eternal truth in the hearts of the honest. He said, our meetings are well attended, and a good ingathering is shortly expected. His own feelings were good, and he could speak well of both Travelling Elders and Branch Presidents; he never wished to labor with better men, for they were always on hand to bear testimony to the world, or anything required of them by the servants of God.

Elder George Hunter said he thanked God for the privilege of meeting with the Saints and servants of God in that hall, and he desired to bear testimony that the Saints were a good people, striving to live according to the will of God.

Elder S. Southwick said it was with feelings of joy that he met with the Saints in that place. The people in Staffordshire, he said, are a good people, striving to live their religion, and are longing to emigrate to Zion, so as to be able to do even better in the future.

Elder A. Hatch said, we have now heard from all the Conference Presidents composing this District. He then read the Financial and Statistical Report of the District, for the year

ending Dec. 31, 1867, which was accepted, and may be found in STAR No. 10. He then called the attention of the Saints to the subject, "how to emigrate," and said there was a number of persons in the habit of drinking beer and smoking tobacco. Suppose one hundred persons, in the 1258 composing this District, drank one pint of sixpenny each day, and smoked two pennyworth of tobacco each week, they would expend the sum of nearly five hundred pounds a year, which sum, if wisely used, would emigrate a number of persons each year, or would go a great way in meeting the expenses of the Branches, and in blessing the poor.

The meeting adjourned, after singing by the choir, and benediction by Elder William Gibson.

2½ p.m.

Apostle Orson Pratt presented the Authorities of the Church, who were unanimously sustained by the uplifted hands of the congregation. He then proceeded to say, that this being his last visit to this Conference for some time to come, he should take the liberty of saying a few words before sitting down. He thanked God for the privilege of meeting with the Saints, for he knew this to be the work of God; had it been otherwise, he could not have loved it, and the Saints connected with it, as fervently as he has done. This knowledge did not belong to him alone, but was shared by all that have been baptized into the family and covenant of our heavenly Father. He said, we should undoubtedly feel honored to be associated with the kings and queens of the earth, how much more glorious must it be, to be connected with the kingdom of God, as a son or daughter of the King of kings. He said, we all wish to, and believe we shall eventually become perfect in the kingdom of God, in heaven. What, then, is our duty, seeing that we cannot step from imperfection to perfection at one step? We must progress gradually in every thing that is good; if we would be perfect in heaven, we must learn to be perfect on earth; if we expect no strife in heaven, we must learn to live without it on the earth; and if

we would be united in heaven, we must be so on earth, learning to be obedient to God's servants here below, so as to be entitled to a place among the sanctified of the hosts of heaven.

Elder William Gibson said he knew no greater honor than to teach mankind the truths of the Gospel, to help them to be better, and to escape the evils of sin, and to draw them to purity, and eventually to endless joy in the presence of God. He could bear testimony that God is our Father, the earth our country, and mankind our brethren, and in this work he desired to labor, until the prayer of our Savior be fulfilled, and the will of God be done on earth as it is done in heaven. He concluded with a few words to the strangers, exhorting them to carry out the principles of freedom, by thinking and acting for themselves in relation to the Gospel.

Elder W. B. Preston said he felt truly thankful for the knowledge he possessed relative to the work of God now preached by the Elders. He had often wished that he had lived in the days of the ancient Apostles and Prophets; but now he could bear testimony that Prophets and Apostles do live, and that we are associated with them in spreading the glorious truths of the Gospel to all the nations of the earth. He exhorted the Saints to be truly thankful, and to live according to the teachings of the servants of God.

After singing, and benediction by Apostle F. D. Richards, the meeting adjourned until 6 o'clock, p.m.

6 p.m.

After singing, and prayer by Elder James McGaw,

Apostle F. D. Richards, after referring to his former visits to this Conference, and to the rapid growth of the Church, said the servants of God are going into every nation, sowing the seeds of goodness and purity; and notwithstanding this, the people look upon us with aversion, simply because we are polygamists. In this they are laboring under a false notion, for was not Abraham a polygamist, and at the same time a friend of God? and have not good and wise men practiced polygamy? Yes, even Prophets, Patriarchs, and lawgivers have

done so, and that with the direct sanction of the God of Israel. He said he did not wish to hurt the feelings of any one, but he could not help referring them to what is called the "social evil," which is the effect of the monogamic system. He wished to throw off false delicacy, and inform them that the Saints practiced polygamy, which would put an end to the practice of those sinful indulgences that man is so prone to, and that the Saints have surrounded this divine institution with more rigid rules of virtue, than had been enforced in times gone past. In this and many other countries, the seducer leads away the innocent and unsuspecting from the homes of loving parents, to those of shame and infamy, and the wretch himself remains unpunished; while in Utah, virtue and honor are guarded as something too sacred to be tampered with, and the violator of female virtue finds a deserving punishment, even that of death. He then referred to Hepworth Dixon's work, wherein he states that not one house of ill-repute is to be found in all Utah, with its population of over one hundred thousand. After referring to king Henry VIII. as the founder of the Anglican Church, he concluded, by bearing testimony that the work in which we are engaged is the work of God.

After which, Apostle Orson Pratt said—To our friends this work is a strange work, and even to ourselves it is a wonder, and when compared with other dispensations, it is truly a marvellous work. When God sent Moses

to gather Israel, he found them all located in one land, and even the distance to the land of promise was only eleven days' journey, if taken in a direct course. Not so with this Latter-day Work, for the servants of God are sent into all the world, and they go and make converts in strange lands; from thence they take them over three thousand miles across the sea, and about three thousand miles over the country; this they have been doing for about twenty years, and have succeeded in settling a tract of barren country, some 400 miles in length, with about 105 towns and villages, with a population of a hundred thousand souls. He then prophesied to the strangers, that should they live a few years longer, they would see the Saints return to their former possessions in Missouri; and the nations and people who fight against Zion, would pass away as a dream or a night vision, and eventually the kingdoms of this world would be given into the hands of the Saints, for an everlasting possession.

Benediction by Elder A. Hatch.

Large and attentive audiences attended throughout the day, an excellent spirit prevailed, and all felt it had been a day of great blessings to them.

On Monday evening, in the same hall, a vocal and instrumental concert was held, which reflected much credit on the performers, and committee of arrangements; and thus ended one of the best religious and social gatherings of the Latter-day Saints in Birmingham.

CORRESPONDENCE.

AMERICA.

St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 6, 1867.

Elder Pratt.

Dear Brother,—Feeling a few words from me, in this Western country, would be acceptable to you, I proceed to give you a short sketch of my travels.

I arrived at New York, from Liverpool, on the 6th of October, 1866, in

time to attend the New York Conference, assembled on the 7th of that month. About 200 Saints were present, with many strangers. Elder E. W. Tullidge volunteered his services to travel with me in the ministry, through the States, or wheresoever President Miles wished to send us. Our appointment was first to visit Philadelphia, and, if possible, to revive the

work there. In complying with this appointment, we delivered a course of lectures in Philadelphia, reorganized the Branch, and appointed Elder James May, President. We remained there two weeks, had crowded meetings, and when we left, prospects were good for lively and interesting meetings to be continued. I took leave of brother Tullidge at Philadelphia, to go west and visit my relations in the States of Michigan and Iowa, expecting to meet him in a few weeks at St. Louis, as that was the place in which brother Miles wished us to labor principally through the winter, believing much good could be done in that city and vicinity.

From Philadelphia I took railroad to Buffalo, thence, by steamboat, to the northern part of Michigan, where I landed safely, although the lakes were very rough; while we were making the trip, several boats were driven on shore and wrecked. I found my sister and family glad to see me, but not willing to receive my testimony of the truth. Lying reports about Utah, and apostates innumerable, had full possession of their minds. I did all I could to disabuse their minds of the errors they had run into, but with little effect; I therefore bore a faithful testimony to them of what I knew was true. In a few days I took steamboat at North Port for Chicago, thence by railroad to Denizen, 60 miles north of Council Bluffs city, Iowa, for the purpose of visiting three of my own brothers: they had learned by letter of my intended visit to them, hence were not much surprised to see me; they also had been preparing themselves, in their way, to turn me from the straight road I was in, to the apostate influences they were of: although I found them glad to receive me, as a brother, they soon manifested influences that were not congenial to me, and which I now hate, and hope I ever may; viz., a lying apostate spirit, the same that will receive falsehoods in preference to the truth, and make a man a traitor to the cause of God. I hate that spirit as I do the gates of hell. Well, brother Pratt, I found this spirit reigning triumphantly throughout western Iowa. I preached to them in private and in public, and

in the midst of devils, spiritual mediums, and traitors to the cause of God, who are the worst of all. I bore testimony of the Church of God now gathering to Utah, with their leader. Some gnashed their teeth on me in rage; I am satisfied had they power, they would have killed me: but my time has not yet come to die. In all of my travels in the ministry, I never met with so much of the power of Satan manifested through man. I was obliged to fight those fallen spirits night and day, as long as I was there, which was not very long. I was really glad to get out of that hell, and go to the Missouri river bottoms, away from that influence; to cut cordwood, which I found I had to do to get money to go on to St. Louis. I cut wood for about three weeks, which I was well paid for, and as soon as possible made my way to St. Louis, where I still remain.

In a few more words, I will tell you further of the spirit of western Iowa. That country is principally settled by old "Mormons:" some have been to Utah, and returned ten times more in darkness than before the Holy Ghost first lit the lamp of their understandings. Through transgression the light of God has left them, and it seems to me, as the Book of Mormon declares, they are surrounded by demons, full of all manner of wickedness; truce breakers, false accusers of those that are good, &c. Every Latter-day Saint should ever pray, O Lord, deliver me from apostate influences.

I have had no success whatever with my relations, yet I have done my best to plant the seed of life in their hearts. I leave them in the hands of God.

On my coming to St. Louis, I found Elder Tullidge; he had been here two months, expecting me every week. If ever two "Mormon" Elders were glad to meet, it was we. When he had heard my story of the warfare I had been engaged in, and how I was obliged to work for money to pay my way to St. Louis, he did not blame me. He also had met many opposite influences. When our stories were both told, instead of chiding each other, we knelt in prayer and thanksgiving to God, for sparing us to meet again.

We immediately set to work to

revive the work of God in St. Louis, in addition to what Elder Tullidge had been doing. First, by virtue of my appointment by President Miles, the brethren in Council sustained me President of this Western Mission; I then chose Elder Tullidge my first counsellor and Travelling Elder, and George Dunford second counsellor. We immediately advertised a course of lectures in the *Mo. Republican*; from the first Sunday up to this time, 4 weeks, our meetings have been crowded; several old Saints have desired to be rebaptized. I also took a trip out into Illinois, 30 miles, where I preached 3 times: they pressed me very hard to come again; four gave in their names

to be baptized. I think of soon going over there to organize a Branch. We have found brother George Dunford ready to assist us by his means, and to use his influence for our good in extending the work in this part. Truly there might be (were there Elders from Zion to labor in this part continually) a large Branch in St. Louis, and several small Branches organized in the vicinity. I live in joyful anticipation of the way being opened for my return home in the spring.

My kind love to all in the office. Elder Tullidge also joins in hearty good wishes. Farewell.

L. D. RUDD.

SUMMARY OF NEWS.

—o—

The deepest note which the human ear appears capable of perceiving as a continuous sound, is that produced by sixteen oscillations in a second: the acutest, that which is produced by about 48,000 in the same time.—*Eng. Mechanic*.

During the first ten weeks of the present year, there have been reported, 683 shipwrecks.

On the 11th inst., a great fire occurred in London. Six lives were lost.

The village of Charbonnier, Savoie, France, has been entirely destroyed by fire. Six persons lost their lives, and several others received injury.

On Saturday morning, Feb. 23, there was a slight shock of an earthquake at Westmoreland, England.

The latter part of December, five shocks of an earthquake happened at Erzeroum, in the vicinity of the river Euphrates.

During the early part of the present month, a terrible earthquake occurred at Mytilene, one of the Grecian isles of the Mediterranean, which laid the country in ruins, and caused the death of several hundred persons. It is feared that the whole island will be submerged.

TERRIBLE STORM.—Gibraltar, March 8.—A heavy storm occurred at Valencia on the 4th inst. There was an unusually large number of vessels in harbor, which sustained great damage. Several ships were lost, and 69 hands drowned. The British ships Bosphorus, Sultana, Legion of Honour, and the American ship George Washington, went ashore and became total wrecks. The British ship Western Ocean was saved by cutting away her masts.

NEW YORK, Feb. 25.—Advices received here from Mexico, state that a severe battle took place at San Luis Potosi on the 4th instant, in which the Republicans were utterly routed, losing all their artillery. Escobedo shot 190 foreign Imperialist prisoners, and ordered all foreign volunteers captured from Miramon to be shot for their depredations at Zacatecas. A force of 800 Imperialists, on their way to reinforce the capital, were entirely routed, and 500 captured. It was stated that the whole of the French force would have left Vera Cruz by the middle of March.

NEW YORK, March 12.—The Mexican consul at San Francisco reports that the Liberals hold the city of Mexico.